IN COMMEMORATION OF
EVAN THOMAS

Photo by David McReynolds

(See article on back page)

JULY
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1974

WRL NEWS

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A March For Amnesty and Vets' Rights...

Photo by Bob Parent

. . . on July 4 by some 3,000 persons climaxed four days of intensive action in Washington. Sponsoring the demo was Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization and National Council for Universal & Unconditional Amnesty.

WRL TRAINING PROGRAM 1974
by Grace Hedemann

The peace movement is alive and well. . . if the twenty-two participants in the WRL Training Program are any indication of the spirit and dedication of organizers in 1974. They came from twelve states, ranged in age from 17 to 27, and all had done organizing in their local communities.

The WRL Program geared its activities toward introductions to basic organizing skills and political philosophies, *and* community building within the group. Participants came to share their skills as well as to learn new skills. They came to gain strength from friendships and the community created within eleven short days.

The Program began on Wednesday, June 19 in Voluntown, Ct., with four days in the country followed by seven days in New York City. Basically, the program was divided between the theoretical at Community for Nonviolent Action and the practical in New York City. At CNVA in Voluntown we shared our organizing experiences informally during the daily work projects and the late night jam sessions (nine trainees play the guitar and sing). We held two formal workshops a day. We discussed Gandhian nonviolence, Marxism, nonviolent lifestyles, prisons, women and nonviolence, consensus vs. majoritarian politics and urban organizing.

(continued on page 2)

MUSTE INSTITUTE IS TAX EXEMPT

The A. J. Muste Memorial Institute was formed (but has been inactive pending approval of tax exemption) to produce and distribute educational materials and to conduct conferences, institutes and seminars for promoting the use of nonviolent means in conflict resolution.

On June 27 IRS ruled that contributions to this fund are tax deductible. Contributions from large donors are now welcome and should be sent to 339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012, payable to A. J. Muste Memorial Institute.

GUERRILLA THEATER AT PORTUGUESE TOURIST BUREAU

(See story below)

Photo by Grace Hedemann

WRL TRAINING PROGRAM 1974

(continued from page 1)

Our resource people included David McReynolds, Igal Roodenko, Ed Hedemann, Wendy Schwartz, Honey Knopp, Wally Nelson and William Douthard. We fixed our meals communally. Had a birthday party. Saw "Mahatma Gandhi: The Twentieth Century Prophet." Enjoyed Steve Ladd's (WRL West Field Secretary) revised version of the Larry Gara slide show on WRL's Fifty Years.

We hit New York on a rainy Sunday, June 23. Our real test of endurance and stamina. We stayed *together* at the Washington Square Church in Greenwich Village. In 1971 and 1972 participants split up into staff and EC members homes. Our calendar became filled with impromptu demonstrations and activities along with scheduled events. We scattered the first afternoon. Some of us walked with Mayer Vishner through the Lower East Side experiencing the city, others challenged David McReynolds to a game of Risk, some toured the West Village with Karl Bissinger and then heard Ramsey Clark speak on The State of America, several spent the evening at the Catholic Worker, and others sacked out. We came together again later that night for a discussion on collectives with WIN Magazine. The rest of the week we divided our time between visits to social action programs, discussions on basic skills and using those skills. We visited The Metropolitan Council on Housing, The America Committee on Africa, Quaker Project on Community Conflict, Liberation News Service and WBAI. We had resource people discuss fund raising, mass organizing skills, radical economics, anarchism, media utilization, radical law and transnational movements. We heard Cesar Chavez at the Interfaith Center, joined a picket at the Brooklyn docks to stop delivery of Rhodesian supplies, and participated in the Seven Meditations by the Living Theatre. Later in the week The Living Theatre conducted a workshop for the group on guerrilla theatre. The trainees planned and executed their own demonstration in behalf of the Portuguese colonies liberation. Press releases, leaflets and posters were part of the program training. Various printing methods were presented and visits were made to Come! Unity and Grindstone Press. The group even silkscreened their own tee shirts. Resource people included Bob Swann, Brad Lyttle, Jean Ende, Maris Cakers, Beverly Woodward, Nick Eggleson, Jerry and Lynne Coffin, Jimmy Krugman, Dick Leonard, Jane Benedict, Neil Haworth, Julian Beck and Judith Malina among others.

The group has decided to keep in touch through a round robin packet and will have a reunion next year. Many of the participants will be attending the WRL National Conference, and a number will be starting WRL Locals. The program was uplifting for all of us–staff, resource people and trainees. As one participant put it: "Just sharing ideas and problems was a source of growth and deepens my understanding of the movement and where we are headed."

NEW VICECHAIRPERSON

At a recent EC meeting, Wendy Schwartz, former staff member and current EC member, was elected vice chairperson to replace Jim Forest who resigned because of pressure of work with Fellowship magazine.

NC ELECTION RESULTS

The following were elected to the Executive Committee for three years–Brad Lyttle, Neil Haworth, Sandra Wolf, Lynne Shatzkin Coffin, Eileen Egan, Val Green, John Darr, Edna Coleman. Gwen Reyes and Joanne Sheehan were elected for one year.

Elected to National Committee: East–Jim Bristol and Sue Bass; South–Jerry Wingate, Lynn Lockhart, Scott Herrick, Steve Sunerford; Midwest–Bob Calvert, Pat Hughes; West–Scott Kennedy, Morris Kight.

CONTRIBUTE TO DRAMA ON RESISTANCE TO VIETNAM WAR

WRL is planning to mount a theatrical presentation dramatizing acts of resistance against the Vietnam war. Joseph Chaiken, leading experimental theater director, has agreed to head the project.

The presentation will include songs, poems, skits, etc. A vast amount of material is needed from all sectors of the movment. We need your ideas and suggestions. Please send them to Karl Bissinger, who is coordinating the project.

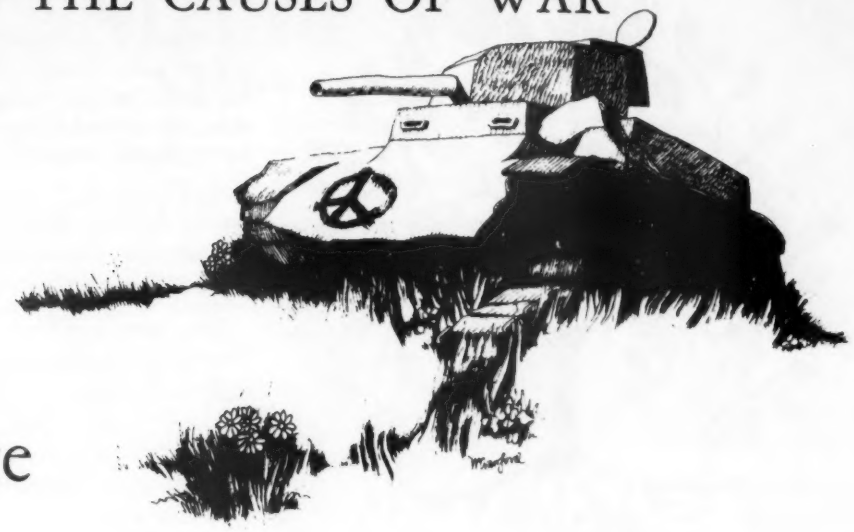
PEACE PRISONER NEEDS JOB

Tom Smith, one of the Chicago 14, who was seized by the authorities while attending last summer's 50th WRL anniversary convention, is now serving a 5-year sentence. In order to get parole and to file a motion for a reduced sentence, he needs an offer of employment.

Copies of such offers should be sent to Judge Edwin A. Robson, Federal District of Illinois–Eastern Division, 219 S. Dearborn (25th floor), Chicago, Ill. Letters in support of sentence reduction also should go to Judge Robson.

"REMOVING THE CAUSES OF WAR"

1974 WRL National Conference



From Friday afternoon, August 30, through lunch on Monday, September 2, the War Resisters League will meet in National Conference at Geneva Point Center on Lake Winnipesaukee, New Hampshire. This is the first time the National Conference has been held on the East Coast. We have had it in Colorado, Michigan, Georgia, Ohio, and California—but never before on the East Coast which means that for the first time many members along the East Coast will be able to attend. And from the West Coast there is news of a bus being chartered to carry our sisters and brothers three thousand miles to be with us.

The National Conference is not built around outstanding speakers, but around outstanding people—our active members and organizers. Those who come will not be sitting for three days of listening, but will be taking part in rap groups and workshops dealing with issues ranging from militarism in our society to racism in our communities; from the place of sex roles in a changing society to discussions on the radical movement in the post-Watergate era; from the problems of the Middle East, to the problems of Indochina. In every possible way, and from every possible angle, we will be searching for ways to apply nonviolence to our lives, our communities, our nation, and the larger world in which we live. There will be hard discussion on local work, on the direction the League should take in the year to come. This is a working conference, bringing League members together from dozens of states (friends and non-members are also always welcome).

However . . . there is more than work. Geneva Point Center is a deeply wooded 236 acre conference center with more than a mile of shoreline along blue waters of Lake Winnepesaukee, with the White Mountains as a background. Canoes and rowboats are available. There are courts for tennis and volleyball. Sandy beaches lie waiting for sunbathers, the waters of the lake for swimmers. And there are miles of wooded forest for hikers. The housing is not luxurious but it is comfortable.

What *is* a WRL National Conference? Let us quote from a recent letter from someone who had been at the Hiram, Ohio, Conference two years ago (where we nearly froze from the cold, and were nearly drowned by rain): "Dear friends, I met some of you two years ago at the WRL conference in Ohio. It was one of the greatest loving experiences I have ever had. I came to the conference messed up. I live in a very conservative area, had few people I could talk to about the things happening around us . . . When I got to the conference it was the first time I had ever seen people attempt to drop social and sexual roles, games, and fronts. It seemed like the first honest attempt of people to act and LOVE like human beings. Even though I have forgotten many names, I haven't forgotten when I was part of a circle where men and women were all hugging, laughing, and crying together; touching and finding out how it feels to be human. I haven't forgotten the talk about Gandhi by a wonderful man who made the 'Generation Gap' into a bond of love and understanding . . . "

(over)

LOCATION AND COST

Get out your map of the Eastern states and you will see Lake Winnipesaukee just east of U.S. Route 93, with Laconia being the nearest city. It is about three hours by bus from Boston. It can be reached by Trailways (there is a direct route up from New York City) and there is an airport nearby. Because air and bus schedules change on June 15, we can't provide that information now, but will mail it to all applicants.

The cost is $30 for the three days, including food and lodging, and a $5 registration fee. (The registration fee is not a hidden contribution to WRL—it is an effort to keep our losses on the Conference as low as possible—the preparations, mailings, etc., related to the Conference will not be fully covered by the registration fee.) If you cannot pay the fee, we will waive it. **If you can send extra money to help with scholarships, we need it.**

Blankets and pillows are provided; if you don't want to bring your own sheets, pillow case, towel and wash cloth, these can be provided for an additional $1.50.

Camping facilities are available but are not a great saving unless you are bringing your whole family with you. There is a charge of $2.50 per night to set up your tent or camper—the agreement with Geneva Point Center is that you will take your meals with everyone else in the main hall at a cost of $6.25 per day. Staff is checking to see if there are public camp grounds nearby but cannot confirm this yet.

Children's rates: there is no charge for children under two years of age (note: no cribs are available, so bring your own). Children two through nine years pay half the adult rate of $30.

There is a range of housing that includes space for families, for couples, and for singles.

ADVANCE RESERVATION: *return to War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012*

I/we wish to register for the WRL National Conference at Geneva Point Center, August 30 through Sept. 2. We enclose a $10 deposit for each adult and want a packet of materials on the conference, including travel directions. Total cost is $35/person, plus $1.50 for linen for the 3 days.

NAME(s) _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Names and ages of children: _____

☐ I/we plan to bring our own linen. ☐ Please reserve ___ set(s) of linen (@ $1.50/set).

☐ I/we plan to set up a tent or bring our camper (@ $2.50/day).
(Meals will be $6.25/day for adults, $3.10/day for children 2-9, free for children under 2).

☐ Can offer ride(s). ☐ May need a ride. ☐ Vegetarian.

Enclosed is my conference deposit of $_____ ($10 for each adult).

Enclosed is $_____ for the scholarship fund, to help those unable to pay.

ORGANIZING NOTES

by Ed Hedemann

Over the last two months WRL local groups activity was primarily in the form of educational events. However, two demonstrations are worth noting.

Five members of the **Isla Vista Life Resources Center WRL** greeted retired General Maxwell Taylor (ex-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former Ambassador to South Vietnam) as he arrived in Santa Barbara on May 8 to speak on "National Security in Disrepute" at the Channel City Club. The WRLers carried signs reading "Where were you in '62?," "From Nazi Germany to National Security?," "Amnesty for War Criminals; Nixon and Taylor," "National Leadership in Disrepute," etc. Though a number of the 400 persons (all male) attending the luncheon criticized the demonstrators, reactions were mixed: "Don't confuse all of them [public officials] with the bad apples!" Taylor greeted the line of demonstrators with a broad smile and a nod as he got in his car and left the scene after just over an hour with the club.

The **University of Minnesota WRL/FOR** in Minneapolis joined with other campus groups in a boycott of non-UFW lettuce in the Student Union. Leafleting, letter writing, picketing, etc., helped persuade students to an overwhelming support of UFW lettuce in a referendum. The administration decided to buy UFW lettuce but keep non-UFW lettuce for "freedom of choice." Agitation continued. A confrontation between 100 UFW supporters and the Board of Regents occurred as the Regents met. The University then decided to stop buying lettuce from any source. It used to spend $200 per day on lettuce.

WRL/Southwest is planning in Albuquerque a major demonstration in August around Hiroshima Day, possibly a march from Santa Fe to Los Alamos, the site of the construction of the first nuclear weapons. Other locals are expected to have demonstrations on August 6–9.

Jersey Shore WRL held a one day fast from noon June 30 to noon July 1 in support of Buddhist monks in Thieu's prisons. Sympathetic persons who could not fast were asked to sponsor a faster by donating the cost of his/her meals. The money saved was split between the Buddhist Peace Delegation in Paris and JSWRL.

The Jersey Short leafleting project is almost underway. The idea of the project is to put out "a leaflet a week" at the same place and time, with commentary on a current news topic from a nonviolent perspective–sort of a nonviolent alternative news.

Jersey Shore WRL has committed itself to a nonviolence fair in the Fall. The fair would involve booths on various issues and topics around a central area where there would be speakers, panel discussions, films, slide shows, etc. The fair is scheduled for Sept. 27–28 and they are hoping to get well-known speakers for the talks and panels.

For the past year the **Atlanta Workshop in Nonviolence** has been developing a Peace Education Project based on the WILPF curriculum "Learning Peace." AWIN under the direction of Kate Sheehan has developed four demonstration kits and has taken them around to various middle and high schools.

So far, the program has been accepted by the parochial school system of Atlanta. A priest/teacher at a local military high school will be using the material for a 4-week course next year! A number of public school history and civics teachers are interested and AWIN hopes that it'll be in at least a dozen schools by the Fall. With two AWIN members on the City Council, and since other City Council and School Board members, and even the Mayor, are advocates of nonviolence, chances are good that the program may be accepted for the public school system.

WRL/West in San Francisco has set up a series of "community meetings" to get in closer contact with their 1000+ membership. Northern Calif. was broken up into 9 areas in which Steve Ladd will speak. The basic procedure is to set a time and place, follow up with a mailing to the area, and a few phone calls. Then the meetings begin with the WRL slide show (put together by Larry Gara and modified by Steve) to stimulate discussion.

At the first community meeting only four showed. But at the next 3 meetings a dozen or so showed–many old-time WRLers expressing a new interest as well as some new faces.

Detroit WRL has been involved with a number of other Michigan groups in an attempt to put an end to the temporarily dormant Sanguine Project. Sanguine is a Navy project to build a huge low frequency underground antenna to communicate with nuclear submarines during an attack.

Detroit WRL is planning to set up a regional conference in the Fall in an effort to organize a Great Lakes regional office of WRL. The primary function of a WRL regional office is to reach out into a multi-state region in order to disseminate information on nonviolence and WRL programs, and assist in organizing local groups.

Iowa City WRL, with assistance from Plains States WRL, put together a successful weekend "organizers' conference" May 11–12 which attracted about 40 people from three states. Outside resource people included Igal Roodenko, Walter Gormley, and Ed Sowders of Safe Return.

Shortly afterwards, Plains States WRL in Kansas City (particularly through the efforts of John Hammond), in coordination with community groups put on an all day (May 14) Amnesty conference attracting 40 people–mainly from the religious community. The aim of the conference was not only to educate about the urgent need for amnesty but to attract one or more people to organize full-time for amnesty in the Kansas City area. About a dozen people came out of the conference wanting to work exclusively on amnesty. Outside resource people included Louise Ransom (Gold Star mother), John Swomley, Ed Sowders, and Igal Roodenko.

Attempts to organize WRL locals have been going on in San Jose (California), Oak Park (Illinois), Samuels (Idaho), Morgantown (West Virginia), Jacksonville (Florida), Dickeyville (Wisconsin), and Tampa (Florida). In Oak Park, Lee and Susan Webster, who have been doing WRL organizing for several months, have stimulated interest in a WRL local group formation with a couple of other people. Their recent activities include working on amnesty and release of political prisoners in South Vietnam.

Islandia, Inc., a nonviolent social change intentional family, have decided to start a WRL branch in the San Jose-Santa Cruz area. They are currently searching for land in the Santa Cruz mountains. They have been together for over a year and hope to have a full-time organizer to coordinate WRL activities.

WRL Organizer's Manual. Essential for organizers, especially for groups just getting started. Contains sections on organizing skills, accounts of direct action campaigns, study guides, resources, etc. Written by WRL organizers, staff, and others. New chapters added periodically–a living book. $3.

Counter-Recruiting Campaign packet. Includes 13 items and an action outline. $1.50.

Local Military-Industrial Complex Action packet. Outline on action and research. 30¢.

DISARMAMENT: STEP TOWARD

by David McReynolds

One way of measuring the trauma of the Vietnam War would be to realize how completely it diverted our attention from the nuclear arms race. Pacifists under 25 can remember the days of The Resistance, the Marches on Washington, the burning of draft cards and draft files–but the days of mass protest against nuclear weapons are unknown. Many older pacifists have also forgotten this period, counting it as only a prelude to our taking a "more revolutionary"stand in recognizing the role of U.S. imperialism and the need to change it, to fight it in country after country. With the end of *direct* U.S. involvement in Indochina we have looked for other "concrete issues" such as Chile, the Phillipines, amnesty, etc., in an effort to develop a new program.

This article, which I hope will be read before the National Conference, is intended to signal a discussion that may lead us back to the issue of disarmament and a recognition that disarmament is a central issue for us. (Let me suggest the necessary limitations of any new emphasis. If we make disarmament *the* top priority, it does not mean we are writing off Vietnam, giving up Amnesty, or forgetting other issues with which we have a concern. Clearly the peace movement has a moral obligation to the people of Indochina which must link us to them for many years to come. Clearly also the issue of Amnesty involves our own youth who opposed the war and to whom we are also linked. Nor has it ever been true that a radical organization could focus on only one issue at a time. We should continue to be concerned with poverty, racism, and the immediate impact of U.S. policy in other countries.)

Our basic work is disarmament, a work interrupted by the Vietnam war, but to which we must now return with renewed urgency. In the early 1960's when events forced us to shift our emphasis to Vietnam, there was a general consensus among pacifists and many non-pacifists that the nuclear arms race would almost certainly lead to war. That assumption is even truer today than it was then.

It is truer on two counts. First, all the arguments we used then are still true with the frightening additional fact that the nuclear powers now have more weapons than ten years ago. All the arguments regarding accidental war are stronger. All the difficulties of inspection systems have been compounded by technical developments. And now, as then, we argue that a system of "defense" which rests on the assumption of "Mutual Assured Destruction" (MAD) is literally insane. Minds unhinged enough to manufacture and emplace the bombs and missiles are certainly unhinged enough to use them. In previous history a defense meant what the word implies–the ability to defend a nation against attack. Only since the development of the atomic bomb has defense lost that meaning altogether–now meaning the ability, *after your own nation has been destroyed,* to then destroy the attacker. We have lived with this madness so long we take it as a normal state. I suggest it is psychotic behavior, and not less psychotic simply because it is widespread.

Unbalanced Terror

The second count on which the danger of war is even greater now than in the 1960's is the breakdown of the irrational theory of the "balance of terror." So long as the world was divided into two great power blocs the situation, terrifying as it was, had at least a short range stability to it. The nuclear weapons of France and England did not exist as an independent third force, but were politically part of the U.S. bloc. However in the past decade the "two bloc" world has become the "five bloc" world, with Western Europe developing as a political and economic force no longer so firmly tied to the U.S. and with China emerging as a major nuclear power, and with Japan–momentarily without such weapons–having become one of the world's great economic powers.

The problem of "balancing" a five power world is enormously more difficult than balancing a two power world. The differences in language, culture, history, national objectives, etc., increase the risk of an error, of a fatal miscalculation, in affairs between nations–and such risk of error increases sharply with the number of players at the nuclear game. As if this were not enough, India is now a nuclear power, C.L. Sulzberger has reported in the *N.Y. Times* that Isreal already has the bomb, and the U.S. is introducing nuclear reactors into Egypt. The *N.Y. Times* reported on July 5 that officials of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency felt that 24 other nations could join the nuclear club in the next ten years–with Japan heading the list.

Against these realities the SALT talks become meaningless. The U.S./U.S.S.R. are engaged in a lost cause in seeking to limit their own arms through special treaty when China, bound by no such treaty, will eventually force both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. to resume the arms race. But of course the SALT talks have never even halted the arms race. At best they have *slowed the pace* of that race, meaning that things continue to get more dangerous each year but the danger increases a little less rapidly.

Disarmament–A Revolutionary Policy

All of this may seem terribly abstract at first. War may come or it may not–in any event it is in the future. Today the U.S. imposes its power on nations such as South Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, the Phillipines, Indonesia, Chile, Greece, etc. (Just as the Soviet Union imposes its policy on the nations of Eastern Europe.) Aren't these more immediate problems? Aren't inflation and unemployment here at home more urgent? What about the continuing extension of the State police power, our steady steps toward 1984?

The answer is that these things are linked to the arms race and the militarization of our society. First, it is the very existence of this "empire of arms" that makes it possible for either the U.S. or the Soviet Union to dominate other nations. Would it have been possible to overthrow Allende without U.S. military aid? Would Czechoslovakia remain a Communist dictatorship if Soviet troops were not in Eastern Europe? Could the appalling tragedy of Indochina ever have occurred if the U.S. had been disarmed? To ask these questions is to answer them. Disarmament is not a conservative cause designed to protect the status quo–it is a revolutionary act, denying the exploiter the power of military coercion over the exploited, placing the ruler and the ruled in a situation of equality where social revolution becomes virtually inevitable.

Arms Control–The Conservative Cause

The status quo seeks for arms *control* to help preserve its dominant position at the lowest cost and least risk. When the U.S. had a nuclear monopoly it sought an arms control arrangement which would have frozen the Soviet Union into a secondary position. Now that the U.S. and the Soviets have a rough parity in the game of MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) they seek to limit the number of other nations with nuclear weapons. China obviously rejects this concept of a "Pax Soviet/Americana" just as the Soviets had earlier rejected the proposed "Pax Americana." But

RD LIBERATION

no power, China included, seeks disarmament. (Though for political reasons every nuclear power makes a great public show of being for disarmament.) In the 29 years since the nuclear race began, there has not been *one step* toward disarmament. The pacifist, no matter how naive politically, has done far better–for each pacifist has at least disarmed one person!

Part of the problem, which can be stated but not fully developed here, is that even if the great powers were actually committed to multilateral disarmament (instead of giving it only lip service), the very rules of the arms race make multilateral action impossible since any disarmament implies a degree of risk that runs directly counter to the accepted theory of a MAD defense. The only approach that has political reality is one of bold unilateral initiatives in which one begins by realizing that the theory behind a MAD defense is, obviously, as insane as its acronym. One can sum up the difference between the nonpacifist and pacifist approaches by saying that the military is willing to put the whole world at risk in hopes of preventing attack, while the pacifist is prepared to put his/her own nation at risk in the process of trying to keep the world intact. If the military fails, we all die. If the pacifist fails, most of humanity will survive.

Finally, what are the domestic implications of the arms race? Domestic militarism, the reflection of the arms race, has two crucial implications for the American people–far more important than the limited space devoted to them here.

Militarism–Oppressor of the Poor

First, even if the U.S. had no foreign enemies–if China and the Soviet Union were to vanish tomorrow–we would be strongly committed to our present garrison state because arms expenditures make up the basis of the Military/Industrial Complex which, while enormously wasteful of resources, and enormously distorting in terms of real economic needs (which do we really need most: missiles or hospitals?) is now the basis for our economy. Any radical change risks profound economic dislocation. As a consequence, our "under class" suffers greatly: unemployment among the poor, lack of funds for housing, education, medicine, etc.–and massive inflation.

Second, the militarizing of America strikes hard at the very democracy the military is supposed to protect. Watergate, unbridled executive power, a 1984 mentality in high places–all these are reflections of a philosophy of defense in which it is argued we may have to lose our democracy in order to save it. Year by year the differences between the Soviet Union and ourselves grow less distinct. We lose what we sought to protect, just as we may end by destroying all we had sought to save.

Clearly our focus on militarism and disarmament is not some irrelevant pacifist project, removed from more pressing daily problems, but is a profound thrust toward liberation both for us in America and for peoples around the planet. Just as American military power is linked to domestic poverty, to torture in Brazil, to terrorism in Santiago, and to the risk of world destruction, so the pacifist demand for immediate unilateral action for disarmament is linked to demands for alternatives to a capitalist structure sustained by arms spending, and a foreign policy sustained by nuclear missiles.

To make world disarmament our basic goal is at the same time to link ourselves with liberation movements everywhere in the world and to align us against the quasi-totalitarian forces that now dominate our national life.

TAX RESISTANCE AND WRL

by Wendy Schwartz

This is a society in which the beliefs of pacifists are constantly ravaged. Every aspect of our existence is pervaded by violence and war; our integrity is diminished by the compromises we must make in order to simply survive.

Many of us have chosen tax resistance as a way of preserving a small part of our morality. By refusing to willingly turn our money over to the government, we are demonstrating that we have the strength to say "no" when the assaults on our values become too great to withstand. And this one small "no"–which is available to all of us, no matter what our sex or age–shows the government that we are able to nonviolently steal power from it, and portends that larger thefts may be in the offing.

The single most well-known act of tax resistance was, of course, Henry David Thoreau's. The night he spent in jail, along with his *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, has no doubt encouraged many people with vague pacifist beliefs to express them militantly. But the repercussions of such actions have proved to be far greater than Thoreau's writings and experience indicate. Tax refusal is an ongoing activity pitting the resisters against the Internal Revenue Service in a never-ending spar, which by definition can't end with a standoff. At the very least, the tax resisters will experience severe apprehension in yearly cycles, at the most, we will spend time in prison. Many of us keep on resisting despite the hassles and the risks, however, because there is no way we can reconcile our pacifist principles with the knowledge that our money is being used for war.

The contradictions we face and the compromises we make as individual pacifists are paralleled by those a pacifist organization must grapple with. For WRL, advocation of and complicity with tax resistance evolved after a lengthy process of defining its relationship to the government's military policies. The League's recent confrontation with the Internal Revenue Service, which resulted in the seizure by IRS of $3,432.58 from its bank account, was in one way the culmination of a policy WRL adopted several years ago, and in another, the beginning of a new and different way of dealing with IRS.

Jessie Wallace Hughan, one of WRL's founders, articulated its first policy on war taxes in a 1935 pamphlet. She didn't advocate resistance at that time, saying that the military was "supported chiefly from indirect taxes which cannot be located." Nevertheless Hughan asserted that pacifists consider "taxation as a form of seizure, not a voluntary contribution." She urged taxpayers to indicate that they were paying under protest.

The League's position on taxes remained constant throughout World War II. In early 1945 it printed and disseminated a sticker that said, "This tax goes chiefly for war purposes; as a pacifist I pay it only under protest," and urged that people attach it to their payments.

Then in the late 1940's, when the pacifist movement was becoming more militant on all issues, the question of payment of war taxes was raised again. A newly formed organization, Peacemakers, made tax resistance an integral part of its program. The WRL membership at that time was also turning its attention to tax refusal, and the responses to a questionnaire sent out by the national office resulted in a shift of the League's policy. Acting on a mandate to deal with tax resistance "with vigor and imagination," WRL issued a memo promoting token tax refusal, and

(continued on next page)

TAX RESISTANCE AND WRL *(continued from preceding page)*

suggesting that those withholding five or ten dollars from the government should write to President Eisenhower and members of Congress advising them of their resistance and urging a restructuring of the federal budget to eliminate military expenditures.

By 1953 demonstrations at IRS Centers were being held, and in that year there was picketing on April 15 in such diverse areas as New York and Phoenix, Arizona.

The militancy of the WRL staff was astride with that of the membership, and in 1956 Ralph DiGia requested that the League not withhold federal taxes from his salary. The Executive Committee voted to honor Ralph's request, and thus further limit its collaboration with the federal government.

(In the years since WRL made that decision, most staff members have requested that their taxes not be withheld. Many of us also chose to take as little WRL money as possible, and determined our salary by adding together the amount we needed to live on and the social security and state and city taxes which had to be deducted. Consequently, we never received the money we refused to pay IRS. Because of this unorthodox method of calculating salaries, WRL is absorbing the bulk of the loss caused by IRS's seizure, though some staff members–those whose earnings were greater–are planning to pay the League back.)

The first WRL call for total tax resistance was issued in the 1957 March-April *WRL News.* Marion Bromley, a League member and one of the founders of Peacemakers, wrote, "War resisters pledge they 'will not support any kind of war.' If we have reached the point where the major 'support' that is demanded is financial, is it not time to break ranks, to bring the deed more nearly into harmony with the pledge?" From that point on, the League considered tax resistance a basic, if not central, part of its program.

In 1966 a federal tax was added to telephone bills, and in a rare moment of candor, the federal government admitted that the surcharge would be used to help subsidize the war in Indochina. The League urged withholding payment of the phone tax; and in addition, it printed cards explaining the reasons for nonpayment which could be inserted into the telephone company's remittance envelopes. Though most peace organizations joined the League's call for phone tax refusal, WRL was one of a very few groups to withhold payment itself.

Tax resistance took on new importance as a League program when Maris Cakars joined the staff. Maris, who became known as the "taxidermist," sought to make tax refusal a major protest action involving many thousands of people. Antiwar feeling and activity were mushrooming, and people were receptive to new and creative ways of making their dissatisfaction with the government known. Tax resistance buttons became a much demanded item, and leaflets calling for income and telephone tax resistance were distributed throughout the country. IRS's discomfort over the burgeoning movement grew with each new resister, and as the government's reprisals became more frequent, the need for legal information within the tax resistance community became manifest.

Soon tax resistance became too much of a project for WRL to handle while still promoting other types of protest activity. In 1969, then, a group of resisters formed War Tax Resistance, a new and separate organization whose activities would focus solely on all aspects of tax refusal. The founding of WTR was perhaps among the movement's most joyous occasions; its first press conference included Allen Ginsberg's reading of a now famous tax resistance poem, and Pete Seeger's musical pleas for peace. Even the newspeople abandoned their traditional cloak of journalistic detachment, and tapped their feet to the tunes Pete played on the banjo. Their uncharacteristic enthusiasm was indicative of the way WTR was to be received in general, and the height of the Indochina War years was marked by an important and widespread tax resistance movement.

Though the War is waged more covertly now, military expenditures have not decreased, and people are still refusing to pay taxes. IRS's harassment of resisters is seemingly increasing, and in many cases resistance activity degenerates into a kind of cat-and-mouse game between the resister and an IRS agent. IRS clearly has not let the complexity of Richard Nixon's income tax claims sap its energies, so its resourcefulness shouldn't be underestimated. It may be true that IRS's vigorous pursuit of resisters is a conscious attempt to prove its efficiency in the face of criticism over the way it handled the President's alleged fraudulent forms.

Tax resistance activity has been recently taking new forms. The American Friends Service Committee filed suit against IRS, and won the right to refrain from withholding federal taxes from the salaries of two employees, because paying taxes violated their religious beliefs. Though IRS is currently appealing that limited decision to the Supreme Court, WRL is exploring ways to have it broadened. The League would like all employees, working at any job, who have moral (in place of religious) objections to paying war taxes to be legally able to ask their employers to refrain from withholding tax. Such a decision would definitively free employers from acting as a collection agency for the government, and would allow individuals to confront IRS directly without the employer as a go-between.

Conscientious objector status for taxpayers is also being considered now. The World Peace Tax Fund has prepared bills (H.R. 7053 and H.R. 13958), sponsored by Congresspersons Dellums and Helstoski, that would allow people "to designate a portion of their taxes for nonviolent means of resolving world conflicts." These bills don't fully live up to the pacifist ideal, and there is probably little chance of their passage in the immediate future. However, they do indicate a growing awareness of validity of the pacifist position, and they can serve as a consciousness raising device.

A pacifist's strivings to live a totally consistent life are almost as utopian as the concept of a warless world. It has been said, by the more practical among us, that tax resistance is futile because finally the government wins, either by seizing the money or by sending the resister to jail, and that it is solely an exercise in moral masturbation. I would say to these pragamatists two things. The first is that tax resisters can affect the efficiency of the system, and by doing so can at least slow down some of the processes we oppose. The second is a more philosophical observation: respect for the consciences of individuals has become an antediluvian concept. If we can respect our own morality enough to seek to serve it, in time perhaps we will grow to respect the morality of each other.

"VIETNAM CONS" MEET

WRL staff has worked with veterans of the U.S. prison system who were jailed for resisting the Vietnam War. One meeting was held in New York in February, a second in Philadelphia in June, and the next meeting is to be Saturday, September 14, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the WRL office. WRL members with recent prison experience who would like to meet with other Vietnam era convicts should contact Karl Bissinger of WRL staff.

PROTEST INDIA'S A-TEST

"Being opposed to **ALL** nuclear tests, the War Resisters League is demonstrating in protest today (May 20), just as it did on Oct. 16, 1964, when China conducted its first test," stated leaflets distributed to lunchtime crowds during this picketing of Air India.

On June 10, after France announced its 8th series of atmospheric nuclear tests in the Pacific, WRL picketed the French Government Tourict Office.

NONVIOLENCE IN THE PRISONS

by Larry Gara

Prisons provide one of the best examples of a totalitarian environment where administrators and guards exercise virtually complete control over the lives of the prisoners. Although prisons differ greatly in such matters as cleanliness, food, and writing and visiting privileges, all of them are extremely oppressive. Until recently the absolute power of prison officials went unquestioned. Prisons are the closest thing to chattel slavery existing in the 20th century United States. Change is coming, but it is suicide for prisoners to attempt to effect change by use of violence. Even on strictly practical grounds, violence cannot be useful to those in prison unless they are willing to die in order to call attention to a problem, or simply wish to strike out against their oppressors. If it accomplishes little else, prison violence does gain attention. Attica has become a symbol, even though conditions there have not improved since the tragic loss of 43 lives. Nonviolent methods do not guarantee success either, but they can inject a creative element into an oppressive prison situation and at times they have led to positive results.

Nonviolent actions sometimes occur because individuals who are not necessarily pacifist decide that they are appropriate to the prison situation. Not all political prisoners have accepted Gandhi's advice that his followers should obey the rules and assume the role of a model prisoner. Work and hunger strikes are the traditional nonviolent weapons available to prisoners throughout the world. The hunger strike is effective both because it generates attention and because officials are sensitive about the consequences of having a prisoner, especially a political prisoner, die while in confinement. In 1920 a hunger strike of Sinn Fein prisoners in Ireland, which led to a general strike in their support, resulted in their unconditional release from British jail. When another Irish striker, Terence McSweeney, died in London's Brixton jail after a 74-day fast, his name became a symbol of resistance to British tyranny. Within the past few months political prisoners have participated in hunger strikes in South Vietnam, Spain and the Soviet Union, protesting their incarceration and the conditions under which they are forced to live.

At the time of World War I Evan Thomas and other war resisters went on hunger and work strikes to protest the mistreatment of Molokon conscientious objectors in Leavenworth. The strikes and the attention they got led to official investigation of conditions in Leavenworth and to relief for some, release for others. Once again during World War II war resisters were jailed and again some of them participated in strikes within prison. Some of those strikes were to break down compulsory racial segregation in the prison dining halls. At the federal prison in Danbury, Connecticut, such a work stoppage was successful and Danbury became the first federal prison to have a racially integrated dining hall.

A strike of war resisters at Lewisburg started as a move against segregation and then moved into action against the conditions of imprisonment, especially censorship. The Director of the Bureau of Prisons eventually agreed to liberalize censorship regulations and the strike ended on that note. Stanley Murphy and Louis Taylor participated in several work and hunger strikes in Danbury and Springfield, where they were sent for psychiatric "observation" which included time in a strip cell and beatings by guards. Their efforts led to an investigation of conditions at the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners and some personnel changes, including a new warden. Another resister, Corbett Bishop, refused to cooperate in any way with his incarceration. He was arrested four times and each time had to be carried into court or jail and force fed for what was eventually a total of 426 days of total noncooperation. After serving only a fourth of his sentence, Corbett Bishop was unconditionally released, proving the tremendous power of nonviolent resistance even when confronting the ruthless power of the federal prison system.

Short term work and hunger strikes were also used by the Vietnam-era war resisters. Some participated in such major nonviolent campaigns against the prison system as the strike at Danbury which involved most of the prisoners for a 9-day period. A resistance community called the Prisoners Strike for Peace grew out of that action. A special feature of the Danbury strike was a sympathy demonstration held outside the prison while the strike continued inside. Similar sympathy demonstrations had been held shortly after World War II with prisoners and supporters demanding amnesty for all draft law violators. Nonviolent demonstrations outside Leavenworth Prison are also part of the campaign to support the Leavenworth Brothers accused of various law violations growing out of the 1973 rebellion.

During the time of overt U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, prisoners participated in a number of imaginative acts of resistance to demonstrate their demand that the war be ended. For two days and nights at Danbury, seven men displayed two large banners from the 165 foot water tower in the prison yard. The banners read "Resist Injustice" and "Stop the War." Prisoners in a number of institutions openly refused the special holiday meals for Thanksgiving and Christmas as a way of protesting the continued war. These actions usually included war resisters and others. Just as some of the war resisters abandoned nonviolence in prison, so other prisoners sometimes came to accept nonviolence.

In October, 1973 one such prisoner, Dennis Hartwell, helped organize an historic conference on nonviolence at El Reno prison which had been plagued by a series of race riots. Hartwell had been influenced by Tom Flower, who served some time in El Reno, and he and a few others persisted until they received the cooperation of the officials for a retreat which brought to the prison 18 outsiders well versed in nonviolence. The conference, which was viewed skeptically by many prisoners, attracted a larger number at each session, ending with an arm-around-your-neighbor circle which even included the warden. Visitors and prisoners contributed ideas, music and role playing. Those who participated were enthusiastic about the experience and held a second retreat the following month. That one such experience cannot realistically hope to deal with prison violence was underlined by the fact that the second retreat was severely restricted because of another racial flare-up.

The El Reno conference could become a pilot project for educational programs to demonstrate the possibilities of nonviolent actions in the prisons, but it is only a beginning. Many of those prisoners who are turning to radical politics will most certainly use violent means to attempt to bring about change. Groups like the SLA are an almost inevitable product of today's prisons. Yet at the same time, more and more supporters of prison reform or abolition recognize that it is foolhardy to challenge the authorities with violence. Many of the recent prison strikes were deliberately nonviolent. There is sufficient evidence from past experience to demonstrate the realistic function of nonviolent means in prisons to attract attention to grievances, to gain support for prisoner action, and to effect changes by work stoppages. Even when nonviolence fails in the short run, there is no aftermath of hatred and loss of life. Such actions work to educate the participants in the ways of nonviolence and, when properly supported and publicized, illuminate the path to future change.

THE LIFE OF EVAN THOMAS

by Julius Eichel

Evan Thomas, fellow war resister in world war 1 and world war 2, died in Philadelphia on May 19 at the age of 83. Four weeks before, he had suffered a heart attack and stroke while at his desk studying his patients' records at the Institute for the Achievement of Human Potential, where he worked and lived during his final years. After two weeks at a hospital, he was able to return to the Institute with the hope of further recovery. Instead, his health deteriorated rapidly and he was returned to the hospital where he died.

A memorial service was held May 22 at the Unitarian Church of Germantown, but it was so totally impersonal that ten of us, who either had been close to him in his lifelong struggle for peace or who were his admirers, decided to adjourn to the home of Vivien Lang and reminisce about him.

My memory goes back to a day in March 1918,when Evan was shoved into our midst by two MPs at the detention barracks of Camp Upton, on Long Island. He was assigned an Army cot and lived with us for the next few months, awaiting arrival of a Federal Board of Inquiry which would examine each war objector and offer farm furloughs to those adjudged sincere. Most were ruled insincere and sent to prison. Evan landed in Fort Leavenworth prison where many objectors were in solitary for refusing to submit to prison regulations. Evan decided to join them. Prison uniforms are not made to order and Evan, who was 6'-7", had to pick out the closest to his size. I recall him wearing pants coming to about six inches above his ankles and jacket sleeves about four inches above his wrists.

In solitary confinement, we were chained to the bars of our cells so that we would be compelled to remain standing eight to ten hours a day. The chains around our wrists were attached to a crossbar the height of the waist. For Evan this proved an additional hardship, because he had to stoop with the chains and never could stand upright.

The atrocious conditions at Leavenworth prompted in mid-1919, a major prisoners' protest action known as the Leavenworth mutiny. Evan was released shortly thereafter. His 15-year sentence had been commuted to one year. Evan happened to be one of the first objectors to be released from Leavenworth. Howard Moore, who had gone to prison at about the same time and had become a close friend of Evan, was one of the last to get out. He was released from Fort Douglas, Utah, around the end of 1920.

Neither had any special skill, but both decided on a medical career. To earn money for their education, they sold encyclopedias from door-to-door. Evan's medical ambitions were realized eventually. He graduated as an MD in 1930.

Evan did not choose his field of syphylilogy to make a fortune, but because of humanitarian consideration. He discovered that much of the damage resulted from the then necessary prolonged treatment with drugs. He experimented with the idea that smaller doses, while subjecting the patient to an induced fever, would reduce the time necessary for a cure, with less damage to the tissues. Until the advent of antibiotics, Evan's became the approved procedure for curing syphilis. Afterwards, he headed the penicillin treatment program at Bellevue Hospital in New York. He joined the State Health Department in 1952 and was a consultant to the World Health Organization and the U.S. Public Health Service. For the last ten years of his career, Evan chose to work with retarded children.

When, at the start of world war 2, Congress enacted a law requiring men between the ages of 45 and 65 to register, about 14 men in this age bracket, including six of us who had been imprisoned in world war 1, decided to refuse to register. Evan, Howard Moore and I were among the old Leavenworth alumni who took this protest action. So did A.J. Muste, who in the post-war and Vietnam period was to become the leader of militant, nonviolent protest action. They each were taken into custody for a day, presented with registration cards signed by the authorities and released. In my case, I had the bad luck to appear before a super-patriotic Italian judge trying to demonstrate that he was not for Mussolini. He sent me to jail and set bail at $25,000 (at first he wanted to hold me without bail). I was imprisoned in West Street for a week, released and imprisoned on two subsequent occasions for various forms of noncooperation. Finally, my case was *nolle prossed* and, like the others, I was released with a registration card–in my case, signed by the warden.

During world war 2, Evan, who then was chairman of WRL, and I vigorously opposed the Civilian Public Service Camps, which had been set up by the government with the support of most of the pacifist leaders. Religious COs–which, at the time, meant only members of the historic peace churches–were permitted to go to these camps, instead of jail. As the war progressed, many of the men, realizing that CPS was actually a mild form of concentration camp, walked out and went to jail instead. Evan, through WRL, and I, through *The Absolutist*, a mimeographed publication which I initiated–championed the cause of these CPS walkouts. We also supported the many and various protest actions taken by COs inside prison. My wife Esther and I organized the Families & Friends of Imprisoned COs, to help sustain morale on the outside.

Everyone who knew Evan well, knew of the close relationship with his more famous brother, Norman, perennial Socialist candidate for President and longtime fighter for human rights. When in New York City, Evan lived with Norman and his wife, Violet. They didn't agree on all political issues, but respected each other's opinions. Norman died in 1968.

I, unfortunately, was unable to attend last year's WRL 50th anniversary conference in California. But Evan did, along with Ned Richards, another world war 1 CO. At the end of the conference, some 65 of those attending volunteered to journey to Fresno to nonviolently challenge an anti-mass-picketing injunction against the United Farm Workers. Some 450 persons were in jail for violating the injunction, including Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker, who had come west to attend the conference. So, the project meant either jail or long hours of picketing in the torrid, midsummer sun. (As it turned out, it was the latter, since the authorities were unwilling to make still more arrests.) Among the 65 volunteers for this project was Evan–then 82 years old. But knowing Evan and being familiar with his life, I'm not surprised that he volunteered for this arduous action project–his last.

The last time I saw Evan was on February 2 at New York's Community Church. He had journeyed from Philadelphia to attend the memorial service for Tracy Mygatt and Frances Witherspoon, two of WRL's co-founders. After the service, we spoke briefly. I didn't realize that we never would have a chance to talk again.

As I was writing this article, I received a letter from Erling Lunde, a fellow alumnus from Fort Leavenworth, bringing attention to the fact that Professor Charles Chatfield, author of a number of books on peace, has just assembled a book of Evan's writing. The title is *The Radical 'No'–The Correspondence and Writing of Evan Thomas on War.* It is being printed by Garland Publishing and will be ready in the fall. Because it is a limited printing (only 250), the price of the book will be $19.50, and it will be available from WRL.